

It's National Tourism Week

Be a tourist in your own community!

It's time to talk about all the work done by your employees and volunteers of the City's Tourism and Cultural Services Department. After spending time with Director Kimm Thomas at the Statue & Visitor Center (SVC), anyone would be amazed at all it takes to prepare for, communicate with and guide the many visitors to our area.

Thomas and her staff work with local residents, organizations, and tourists from other cities and countries who plan a visit out of a love for history or just drop by out of curiosity to see our extraordinary statue.

Many activity guides, maps, and brochures on local attractions are available at the SVC as well as being mailed out to interested visitors. In September 2015, almost 14,000 *City of Huntsville* brochures were sent in response to advertising requests. Advertising also spurs calls to help find meeting accommodations, transportation, and many other services that the SVC can provide to make a guest's stay in Huntsville memorable. Guided or self-guided tours of the city can be arranged through the SVC as well (see more inside).

When organizations planning to stay overnight make contact, the group's coordinator is assisted in working with local hotels to ensure great rates on their hotel rooms. Gift bags are created and shared with visiting event attendees, providing the warm welcome Huntsville is known for.

Thomas has been employed with the City of Huntsville since October 2009. Her responsibilities include marketing Huntsville as a tourist destination, overseeing the SVC, Gift Shop and the Wynne Home Arts Center.

"I love my job," Thomas says, "and I believe Huntsville is a fabulous place to promote. It is one of Texas' best kept secrets and is bursting with history, culture and entertainment. There is something to offer everyone in Huntsville!"

So, in honor of National Tourism Week, go out soon and visit something local. Don't be the person who lived here for years and never visited the Statue, Sam Houston's grave, or shopped downtown, or attended an event at Old Town Theater. Start with the Tourism and Cultural Services Department and become a tourist in your own town!



**Kimm Thomas,
Director**

**Don't forget the City Special Election
Saturday, May 7, from 7 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Vote at the Walker County Annex,
1301 Sam Houston Avenue**



City news,
features,
and
updates

This Week in Huntsville

May 5,
2015

Statue & Visitor Center & Gift Shop Staff

Jamie Matthews, Visitor Service Coordinator

Jamie Matthews, Visitor Service Coordinator, has been at the Statue since February 1999. Matthews supports the Director in management and operations of the SVC. She attends several annual trade shows to promote Huntsville as an overnight tourist destination, acts as a tour guide for groups that visit the SVC, is responsible for the daily operations for the Department, and oversees volunteers.

"My job is very rewarding and I love working with all the different people who visit the statue," said Matthews. "I especially like the surprised look on the visitors' faces when I explain how the Statue was made or share how many museums and attractions Huntsville has to offer. We are continually trying to let visitors know how much history is here - there's something that is interesting to everyone."



JAMIE MATTHEWS

Leara Phillips, Administrative Assistant

Administrative Assistant Leara Phillips joined the team in March 2015. She provides administrative, clerical and technical support for department operations and personnel matters. Phillips greets guests, informs citizens on current events through social media and newspaper advertising and handles the SVC's finances. Leara's welcoming smile may be the first you see when you enter the center.

"I love my job," said Phillips, "and visiting with all the different people who stop by. It's amazing that visitors from all over the world stop here to see the Statue. I am constantly learning something new and the staff here is wonderful to work with."



LEARA
PHILLIPS

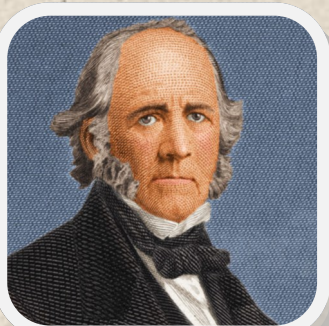
Jessica Lacy, Gift Shop Coordinator

Jessica began employment with the City as the Statue & Visitor Center's Gift Shop Coordinator in December 2015, after ten years of service with Tractor Supply. Jessica is responsible for managing the day-to-day operations and is the purchasing agent for all items carried. She supervises two part-time employees.

"My job is very rewarding because I get to meet people from all around the world, not just America," said Lacy. "In the short time I have been here, I feel it is such a blessing to work with Kimm Thomas and her staff."



JESSICA
LACY



Sam Houston was born on March 2, 1793, near Lexington, Virginia. From 1813 to 1814, he fought in the Creek War and was wounded at Horseshoe Bend. He was elected to Congress in 1823 and again in 1825, and became the governor of Tennessee in 1827.

Sam Houston was made the first president of the Republic of Texas in 1836 and was re-elected in 1841. He was a U.S. Senator from Texas for ten years starting in 1849, then served as the governor of Texas from 1859 until being deposed in 1861, for refusing to pledge allegiance to the Confederacy. He died at home on July 26, 1863. Come to Huntsville where you can learn lots more!

The Wynne Home Arts and Visitor Center

The Wynne Home Arts and Visitor Center (WHAVC) is part of the Tourism and Cultural Services Department. The structure was given to the City of Huntsville by Samuella Wynne Palmer on December 30, 1998, with the stipulation that it would be used as a cultural activities center *“for the encouragement, promotion, improvement, and application of the arts, and for historic preservation projects or activities.”* The WHAVC has an art gallery open to the public year-round, offers an outreach program, provides pottery facilities, arts and crafts classrooms for adults and children, and a gift shop. There is also an herbal cutting garden out back for everyone to enjoy, thanks to the Texas Thyme Unit.



Linda Pease, Cultural Services Coordinator (left), and Lauren Clay, part-time Administrative Assistant

Linda Pease, Cultural Services Coordinator, and part-time Administrative Assistant Lauren Clay work diligently planning a variety of arts and cultural programs. They develop educational and promotional materials and prepare for meetings, receptions, classes, performances, and other events held at this special venue.

The Wynne Home works with the *Huntsville Arts Commission* to promote the arts in Huntsville, and through the *Friends of the Wynne* has many volunteers who unselfishly give of their time to ensure that projects and programs are kept on schedule. Staff also oversees the care and maintenance of the facility.

Pease has worked in several different capacities for the City over the past 40 years, but her love for the arts has kept her at the Wynne Home for the last ten years. Clay is an active artist and adjunct faculty at Sam Houston State University.

“Here at the Wynne Home both the staff and volunteers work to make this a happy and creative place where citizens and visitors can both participate in and enjoy excellent art,” Pease said.

enjoy excel-



Much appreciation to the employees and volunteers at the Statue Visitors Center and the Wynne Home of Arts & Visitors Center for the outstanding jobs they do to promote tourism and the arts in Huntsville!

Statue & Visitor Center City Tours

Contact the Statue at (936) 291-9726 to learn more!

Guided Tours

Your group will be greeted by an adventure guide when you arrive at the Sam Houston Statue Visitor Center. A short presentation on the construction of the statue will be presented while you enjoy a cup of coffee and a break. Take a short stroll through the park and have your picture taken with the face of Sam Houston and the tallest statue in the world of an American hero! Before re-boarding your bus, enjoy the traditional architectural structure of the Visitor Center, a dog-run-style home with a wrap-around porch. Be sure to take time to browse through the gift shop.

The Historical Driving Tour

Our adventure guide will take you on a 90-minute driving tour through Huntsville to learn the fascinating history of our historic community in the piney woods. The fee is \$3 per person with a \$30 minimum deposit. There are no stops on the driving tour.

- ◆ 10 a.m. - Arrive at the Sam Houston Statue/Visitor Center see the tallest statue in the world of an American Hero. Restrooms, coffee, visitor information and a great gift shop.
- ◆ 10:30 a.m. - Driving tour of Huntsville featuring historic sites, Sam Houston State University, the oldest prison unit in Texas, historic downtown, and much more. Noon - lunch at your choice of restaurants
- ◆ 1:30 p.m. - Visit one, or all, of Huntsville's museums and attractions
 - ⇒ Sam Houston Memorial Museum
 - ⇒ Huntsville State Park
 - ⇒ Texas Prison Museum
 - ⇒ Downtown stroll
 - ⇒ H.E.A.R.T.S. Veterans Museum
 - ⇒ Wynne Home Arts Center

The Heritage Home Tour

Our adventure guide will step on your bus and take you to the following homes for a fee of \$6 per person with \$60 minimum deposit (Group of at least 10).

- ◆ 10 a.m. - Arrive at the Sam Houston Statue/Visitor Center to see the tallest statue in the world of an American Hero
 - ⇒ Restrooms, coffee, visitor information, and a great gift shop.
- ◆ 10:30 a.m. - Gibbs Powell House, Joshua Houston, Jr. Home, Wynne Home Arts Center & The Whistler Bed & Breakfast (choose up to three locations)
- ◆ 12 Noon - lunch at your choice of restaurants
- ◆ 1:30 p.m. - Take a step back in time and tour the Cabin on the Square, an old-fashioned ice cream parlor and candy factory at Farmhouse Sweets & Eats or visit unique shops on the historic downtown square.

Self-Guided Tours - pick up a brochure and take yourself on a tour!

Historical Driving Tour

This tour showcases more than 30 beautiful buildings that were developed as early as 1831, creating a scenic course while educating visitors about Huntsville's historic sites.

Downtown Walking Tour

Discover downtown Huntsville, its rich historical heritage, cultural development, and ongoing urban beautification. The area once welcomed prominent Texas leaders including General Sam Houston, Henderson Yoakum and Anthony Martin Branch.

Oakwood Walking Tour

Explore the monuments inside Oakwood Cemetery, the final resting place for many people of historical significance, including General Sam Houston. The founder of Huntsville, Pleasant Gray, deeded the land for this cemetery to the city of Huntsville in 1847.

The Art Tour

This tour guides visitors through the artistic beauty of Huntsville's monuments, murals and statues. This unique display of Huntsville treasures captures history through various expressive works.

Prison Driving Tour

This tour reveals an aspect of the community that intrigues many visitors. Huntsville is the home of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, the only state agency headquartered outside Austin. The Prison Driving Tour features the Texas Prison Museum, area prison units (no facility tours) and the prison cemetery.

Start at www.HuntsvilleTexas.com!



Use these online tools to plan your next trip to Huntsville

[View Our Maps](#)

Plan Your Trip



Take Our Survey



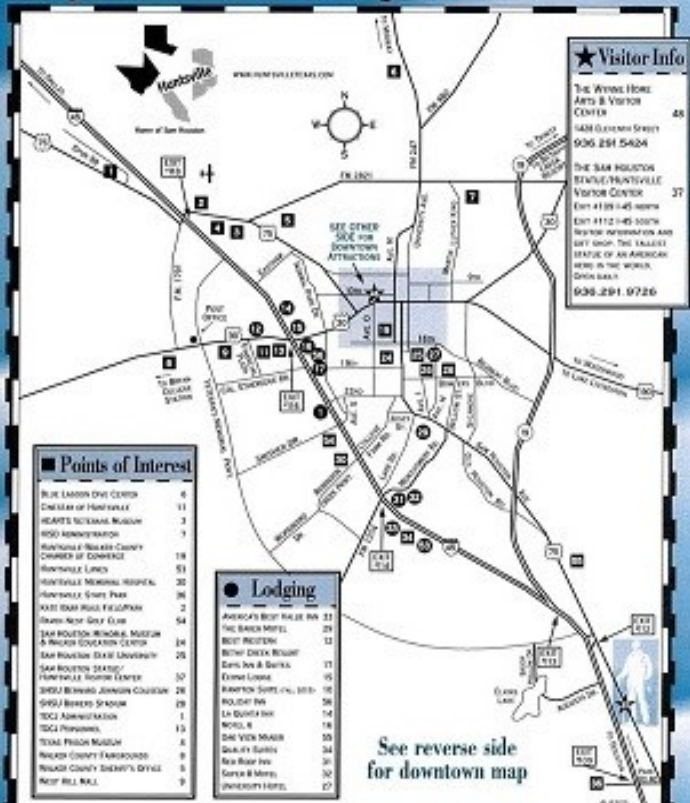
Submit an Event



[Read Latest Blog](#)

Welcome to Huntsville, Texas USA

A Texas Main Street City
Since 2001



Statue & Visitor Center Events

Stop by the Statue in any season and you'll find something going on. You can always count on March and December, but the photos below share a number of special moments over the last few years!

General Sam Houston Birthday Celebration

Celebrate General Sam Houston's birthday and Texas Independence Day every year on March 2, with special activities at the Sam Houston Memorial Museum, Sam Houston Statue, and Oakwood Cemetery.



Holiday Reception

Each December, the Sam Houston Statue Visitor Center invites the public to join them to celebrate the season and help them thank all who have volunteered at the Statue and promoted Tourism in our community.

